

FEBRUARY 2019 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION RESPONSES

Year	Month	FOI Reference	Topic
2019	Feb	FOI/19/006	Correspondence with the Archbishop of Canterbury
2019	Feb	FOI/19/007	Mental health provisions for civil servants
2019	Feb	FOI/19/009	Statutory office holders
2019	Feb	FOI/19/010	Departmental twitter accounts
2019	Feb	FOI/19/011	Spending on Brexit preparations
2019	Feb	FOI/19/012	Border visits
2019	Feb	FOI/19/013	Telephone maintenance contract
2019	Feb	FOI/19/014	Parliamentary passes
2019	Feb	FOI/19/015	Special Adviser expenses
2019	Feb	FOI/19/016	Archival file request: The Wallace Papers
2019	Feb	FOI/19/017	Usage of catering utensils
2019	Feb	FOI/19/018	Spending on team building activities
2019	Feb	FOI/19/019	Employee time clock software systems
2019	Feb	FOI/19/020	Local area network contract
2019	Feb	FOI/19/022	Brexit preparations: Irish backstop research
2019	Feb	FOI/19/023	Engagement with the UK 2020 think-tank
2019	Feb	FOI/19/024	Slack workspace usage
2019	Feb	FOI/19/025	Spending on social media advertising
2019	Feb	FOI/19/026	Brexit preparations: staff recruitment
2019	Feb	FOI/19/027	Spending on Brexit preparations
2019	Feb	FOI/19/028	Spending on newspaper advertising
2019	Feb	FOI/19/029	Local area network contract

FOI Request Reference	FOI/19/006
Month Issued	February 2019
Request	<i>I'd like to request the following information under the FOI Act.</i> <i>I would like to know what correspondence this ministerial government department has had with the Archbishop of Canterbury over the past five years.</i> <i>I would like this information broken down by ANNUAL year, and with copies of the correspondence attached.</i> <i>Please provide as much information as you are able</i>
Response	We have conducted a thorough search of our records, and can confirm we do not hold any correspondence records matching this request.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/19/007																	
Month Issued	February 2019																	
Request	<i>Can you please answer the questions below for your department?</i> <i>They regard mental health provisions for civil servants within departments. I'm aware there are some civil service-wide provisions, but my questions relate only to mental health services internally in your department.</i> <i>1. Total number of civil servants employed in your department for the last 5 years?</i> <i>2. Spending for mental health services in your department for the last 5 years?</i> <i>3. Total number of civil servants using these services in your department for the last 5 years?</i> <i>4. Total number of cases with patients citing 'stress' as a concern for the last 5 years?</i>																	
Response	In response to Q1, please see the table below for the total number of civil servants employed by the Northern Ireland Office for the last 5 years: <table><tr><td>Year</td><td>2014/15</td><td>2015/16</td><td>2016/17</td><td>2017/18</td><td>2018/19 (to 31/12/18)</td></tr><tr><td>No. of Civil Servants</td><td>108</td><td>105</td><td>97</td><td>116</td><td>123</td></tr></table> Staff of the Northern Ireland Civil Service seconded into the Northern Ireland Office, are not included in these figures as their absences are reported through their own departments.						Year	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19 (to 31/12/18)	No. of Civil Servants	108	105	97	116	123
Year	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19 (to 31/12/18)													
No. of Civil Servants	108	105	97	116	123													

In response to Q2, the Northern Ireland Office have a number of Mental Health First Aiders who undertook a two day Mental Health First Aid training course during 2017/18. A Wellbeing app is also available to all staff to support mental wellbeing.#

There are further services that members of staff can avail of and they are:

- Employee Assistance Provision including access to an internet Wellbeing Zone which contains wellbeing advice, fact sheets and videos on managing stress, healthy eating and healthy lifestyle choices as well as counselling services;
- An attendance management system that is aligned with our wellbeing strategy and encourages proactive interventions for employees with mental health issues including prompt Occupational Health referrals with a view to ensuring that supportive measures and reasonable adjustments are identified and implemented promptly;
- An individual Stress Assessment process; and
- Toolkits for managers which recognise the links between musculoskeletal illnesses and mental health conditions
- Wellbeing pages on the departmental Intranet in October 2017 signposting resources to support wellbeing

The total spend on mental health provision for the last 5 years was £3,160

In response to Q3 regarding the total number of civil servants in the Northern Ireland Office using mental health services, data on the number of staff is not held as these services are provided on a confidential basis and our small staff numbers mean this data is not available to us.

In response to Q4, in terms of the number of patients citing stress as a concern; the Cabinet Office requests that sick absence information is recorded as working days lost and not the number of individuals this affects.

A wide range of conditions are encapsulated under the term “Mental Disorders” including conditions such as stress, anxiety, depression, mood-affective disorders, disorders of personality and behaviour and schizophrenia.

The table below sets out the number of working days lost to Mental Disorders in the Northern Ireland Office for the last five years:

Year	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19 (to 30/09/18 – most recent data held)

	Number of Working Days Lost	122	197	418	93	67	
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/19/009																	
Month Issued	February 2019																	
Request	<i>Under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act, please supply me with a list of all “Statutory Office Holders” employed in the Northern Ireland Office or in organizations overseen by Northern Ireland Office. Please provide details of the title of the office, what organization they work in, what legislation establishes the office, and what their employment grade is. Please note, we are not asking for you to name individuals – we simply want to know the title and key characteristics of each statutory office.</i> <i>The Cabinet Office defines statutory office holders as follows, but is unable to provide a list of them:</i> <i>“A statutory office is a position established under legislation (in some instances by a prerogative Order in Council) and sometimes as a separate legal entity or corporation sole, with a specific remit to conduct activities or deliver services within the public sector but which is an individual and not an organisation. The statutory office is a position held by one person, the statutory office holder, though the office may be provided powers to request additional resources if required (these would usually be provided by a department or by Parliament) or to employ staff.” – Cabinet Office “Classification of Public Bodies: Guidance for Departments”</i>																	
Response	The information you seek is set out below: <table><tr><th>Title of Office</th><th>What organisation they work in</th><th>What legislation established the office</th></tr><tr><td>The Crown Solicitor for Northern Ireland</td><td>Crown Solicitor’s Office</td><td>Section 35 of the Northern Ireland Constitution Act 1973</td></tr><tr><td>The Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland</td><td>Electoral Office for Northern Ireland</td><td>Section 14 of the Electoral Law (Northern Ireland) Act 1962</td></tr><tr><td>The Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland</td><td>Office of the Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland</td><td>Section 36 of the Northern Ireland Constitution Act 1973</td></tr><tr><td>The Sentence Review Commissioners</td><td>Office of the Sentence Review Commissioners</td><td>Northern Ireland (Sentences) Act 1998</td></tr></table>			Title of Office	What organisation they work in	What legislation established the office	The Crown Solicitor for Northern Ireland	Crown Solicitor’s Office	Section 35 of the Northern Ireland Constitution Act 1973	The Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland	Electoral Office for Northern Ireland	Section 14 of the Electoral Law (Northern Ireland) Act 1962	The Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland	Office of the Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland	Section 36 of the Northern Ireland Constitution Act 1973	The Sentence Review Commissioners	Office of the Sentence Review Commissioners	Northern Ireland (Sentences) Act 1998
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	The Reviewer	Independent Office Holder	Section 40 of the Justice and Security Act 2007
	The District Electoral Areas Commissioner	Currently in abeyance	District Electoral Areas Commissioners (Northern Ireland) Order 1984

FOI Request Reference	FOI/19/010
Month Issued	February 2019
Request	<i>I would like to make the following request for documents under the Freedom of Information act:</i> • <i>A list of all twitter accounts which are maintained for your department by either employees or contractors as of today, Friday 11th January 2019.</i>
Response	The Northern Ireland Office maintains one Twitter account, @NIOgov.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/19/011
Month Issued	February 2019
Request	<i>We would like to request the following information under the Freedom of Information Act:</i> 1. <i>How much money have you allocated for 'no deal' planning and delivery?</i> 2. <i>How much of that money has been spent so far?</i> 3. <i>Please detail:</i> a) <i>what companies have been awarded contracts</i> b) <i>what these contracts are for</i> c) <i>how much each contract is worth</i>
Response	Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and I can confirm that the Department has not specifically allocated any funding nor awarded any contracts for no deal planning and delivery.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/19/012
Month Issued	February 2019
Request	<i>Under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 I wish to make a request for information regarding the number of official visits made by members of your department to the Irish/Northern Irish border since 24 June 2016. Alongside this I want</i>

	<i>to request information regarding attendees on these visits, including delegations from other UK government departments and/or diplomatic visitors.</i>
Response	The NIO does not hold the requested information. Official visits made by members of the department to the Irish/ Northern Irish border since 24 June 2016 is not recorded.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/19/013
Month Issued	February 2019
Request	<i>I would like to request information under the Freedom of Information Act. The information that I require relates to a specific telephone maintenance contract.</i> <i>The contract information sent by the organisation previously has now expired please can you provide me with a new update of the telephone maintenance contract:</i> <i>Please can you send me the following contract information with regards to the organisation's telephone system maintenance contract (VOIP or PBX, other) for hardware and Software maintenance and support:</i> <i>1. Contract Type: Maintenance, Managed, Shared (If so please state orgs)</i> <i>2. Existing Supplier: If there is more than one supplier please split each contract up individually.</i> <i>3. Annual Average Spend: The annual average spend for this contract and please provide the average spend over the past 3 years for each provider</i> <i>4. Hardware Brand: The primary hardware brand of the organisation's telephone system.</i> <i>5. Number of telephone users:</i> <i>6. Contract Duration: please include any extension periods.</i> <i>7. Contract Expiry Date: Please provide me with the day/month/year.</i> <i>8. Contract Review Date: Please provide me with the day/month/year.</i> <i>9. Application(s) running on PBX/VOIP systems: Applications that run on the actual PBX or VOIP system. E.g. Contact Centre, Communication Manager.</i> <i>10. Telephone System Type: PBX, VOIP, Lync etc</i> <i>11. Contract Description: Please provide me with a brief description of the overall service provided under this contract.</i> <i>12. Go to Market: How where these services procured, please provide me with either the tender notice or the framework reference number. Please specify if procured through other routes.</i> <i>13. Contact Detail: Of the person from with the organisation responsible for each contract full Contact details including full name, job title, direct contact number and direct email address.</i>

If the service support area has more than one provider for telephone maintenance then can you please split each contract up individually for each provider?

If the contract is a managed service or is a contract that provides more than just telephone maintenance please can you send me all of the information specified above including the person from with the organisation responsible for that particular contract?

If the maintenance for telephone systems is maintained in-house please can you provide me with:

- 1. Number of telephone Users:*
- 2. Hardware Brand: The primary hardware brand of the organisation's telephone system.*
- 3. Application(s) running on PBX/VOIP systems: Applications that run on the actual PBX or VOIP system. E.g. Contact Centre, Communication Manager.*
- 4. Contact Detail: Of the person from with the organisation responsible for telephone maintenance full Contact details including full name, job title, direct contact number and direct email address.*

Also if the contract is due to expire please provide me with the likely outcome of the expiring contract.

If this is a new contract or a new supplier please can you provide me with a short list of suppliers that bid on this service/support contract?

Response

In respect of your questions The Northern Ireland Office can confirm the following:

Item No.	London	Belfast
1	Supplied by MOU with Cabinet Office	Supplied by SLA with IT Assist
2	Shared service details not known	Shared service details not known
3	16/17 – Not Available 17/18 – £2,085.94 18/19 – £1,358.33 year to date	16/17 – £19,863.77 17/18 – £20,919.57 18/19 – £16,045.41 year to date
4	Avaya	Cisco
5	80	195
6	See annexe A	See annexe A
7	See annexe A	See annexe A

8	See annexe A	See annexe A
9	See annexe B	See annexe B
10	See annexe B	See annexe B
11	Managed telephone service including handsets	Managed telephone service including handsets
12	See annexe B	See annexe B
13	See annexe B	See annexe B

The remaining five questions do not apply.

Annexe A

In respect of your questions The Northern Ireland Office can neither confirm nor deny that it holds the information you requested as the duty in section 1(1)(a) of the FOI Act does not apply, by virtue of both section 24(2) that relates to national security and sections 31(1)(a) and 31(3)(a) that relates to law enforcement and the prevention of crime. However, this should not be taken as conclusive evidence that the information you have requested exists or does not exist.

Section 24 is a qualified exemption and so we have considered whether it would be in the public interest for us to confirm or deny whether we hold the information. In this case, we have concluded that the public interest favours neither confirming nor denying whether the requested information is held.

Section 31 is a prejudice based exemption and is subject to the public interest test. With regard to your request, we recognise the public interest in knowing whether the government holds particular information. Balanced against this, is the public interest in not releasing information that would aid a criminal intent on launching cyber-attacks on the Department's IT systems. In this case we consider that the wider public interest lies in neither confirming nor denying that information, which may have been disclosed in an unauthorised manner, is held.

Annexe B

The Northern Ireland Office received managed ICT services from IT Assist (ITA), which is a service provided by Enterprise Shared Services, a body within the Department of Finance, Northern Ireland and The Cabinet Office (CO). The information requested is, therefore, not held by this Department. This information may be available from the Department of Finance, Northern Ireland who can be contacted at foi@finance-ni.gov.uk and Cabinet Office at foi-team@cabinetoffice.gov.uk.

Month Issued	February 2019
Request	<i>Under the Freedom of Information Act, I would like to know the following:</i> <i>1. How many Parliamentary Passes does the department sponsor for its civil servants who require regular access to the Parliamentary estate?</i> <i>2. Please provide:</i> <i>i.) The number of currently active passes broken down by salary grade;</i> <i>ii.) The names of current pass holders.</i>
Response	The Northern Ireland Office has now completed its search for information. Since 1 February 2018, 41 Parliamentary passes have been sponsored by the Northern Ireland Office, including renewals. Some of the information you requested falls under the exemption in Section 40 (2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Section 40(2) exempts personal information from disclosure if that information relates to someone other than the applicant, and if disclosure of that information would, amongst other things, contravene one of the data protection principles in schedule 1 of the Data Protection Act. In this case, I believe disclosure would contravene the first data protection principle, which provides that personal data must be processed fairly and lawfully. Section 40(2) is an absolute exemption and the Northern Ireland Office is not obliged to consider whether the public interest favours disclosing the information. Additionally the names of officials holding Parliamentary passes are considered exempt from release under Section 38 (1) (b) of the FOI (2000) Act. Section 38 (1) (b) exempts from disclosure information that would, or would be likely to endanger the safety of any individual. Section 38 (1) (b) is a qualified exemption and I have considered whether the balance of the public interest favours our release of this material in each case. There is a general public interest in disclosure of information and I recognise that openness in government may increase public trust in and engagement with the government. However, this must be weighed against the consideration that the safety of any individuals named could be compromised by the disclosure of their possession of a pass allowing access to the Parliamentary Estate, given the considerable utility of such a pass to extremist groups, including those which have historically employed violence to achieve their goals. Taking into account all the circumstances of this case, I have concluded that the balance of public interest favours withholding this information under section 38 (1) (b). Due to the small numbers involved, I am unable to provide a breakdown of passes issued by grade, as this information could allow the identification of individuals.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/19/015
Month Issued	February 2019
Request	<i>I am sending this request under the Freedom of Information Act.</i> <i>Please provide the total amount in expenses claimed by special advisors of your department in each of the last five financial years, and the current financial year to date.</i> <i>Please provide this broken down by named special advisor, and provide for each item, the amount claimed, the supplier, the reason for claim and the date of the expense, as well as any other information held centrally about these transactions in the accounting software used to record and process them.</i>
Response	The law allows us to decline to answer FOI requests when we estimate it would cost us more than £600 (equivalent to 3.5 working days' worth of work, calculated at £25 per hour) to identify, locate, extract and then provide the information that has been asked for. To comply with the request and to enable us to identify whether we hold any such material, officials would be required to open and read a large amount of records individually. You should not infer from this that the Northern Ireland Office holds a large amount of information relating to the subjects you have asked about, only that we would need to search through a large amount of records in order to find out whether we hold any information relevant to your request. You can find out more about Section 12(1) by reading the extract from the Act and some guidance points we consider when applying this exemption, attached at the end of this letter. You can also find more information by reading the full text of the Act, available at Cost limits Although we cannot answer your request at the moment, we might be able to answer a further refined request within the cost limit. You may wish to consider a shorter timeframe for the request or perhaps provide a series of key phrases for us to search. Please note that, as in this instance, a further refined request may still not fall within the FOIA cost limit. <u>ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT SECTION 12(1)</u>

We have provided below additional information about Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act. We have included some extracts from the legislation, as well as some of the guidance we use when applying it. We hope you find this information useful.

The legislation

Section 1: Right of Access to information held by public authorities

- (1) Any person making a request for information to a public authority is entitled—
 - (a) to be informed in writing by the public authority whether it holds information of the description specified in the request, and
 - (b) if that is the case, to have that information communicated to him.

Section 12: Cost of compliance exceeds appropriate limit

- (1) Section 1(1) does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit.
- (2) Subsection (1) does not exempt the public authority from its obligation to comply with paragraph (a) of section 1(1) unless the estimated cost of complying with that paragraph alone would exceed the appropriate limit.
- (3) In subsections (1) and (2) “the appropriate limit” means such amount as may be prescribed, and different amounts may be prescribed in relation to different cases.
- (4) The Secretary of State may by regulations provide that, in such circumstances as may be prescribed, where two or more requests for information are made to a public authority—
 - 1) by one person, or
 - 2) by different persons who appear to the public authority to be acting in concert or in pursuance of a campaign, the estimated cost of complying with any of the requests is to be taken to be the estimated total cost of complying with all of them.
- (5) The Secretary of State may by regulations make provision for the purposes of this section as to the costs to be estimated and as to the manner in which they are to be estimated.

Guidance

The appropriate limit

The 'appropriate limit', for the purposes of section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act has been set at:

- £600 for central government and Parliament.

	• The hourly rate is set at £25 per person per hour. The following activities may be taken into account when public authorities are estimating whether the appropriate limit has been exceeded. • determining whether it holds the information requested • locating the information or documents containing the information • retrieving such information or documents • extracting the information from the document containing it.
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/19/016
Month Issued	February 2019
Request	<i>I request access to the file listed below under FOIA and catalogued by the National Archives at Kew as being retained by NIO:</i> <i>CJ 4/7231 - Correspondence between Colin Wallace and Michael Marshall MP (The Wallace Papers).</i>
Response	Under section 22 of the FOIA we are not obliged to provide information that is intended for future publication. In line with the terms of this exemption in the Freedom of Information Act, we have considered whether it would be in the public interest for us to provide you with the information ahead of publication, despite the exemption being applicable. This request is denied under section 22 of the FOI Act. The information you have requested will be transferred to The National Archives in due course as required under the Public Records Act. Were we release the files to you under FOI we would for practical reasons need to retain the files from public release until any internal review processes and subsequent ICO actions had run their course. We believe that the quickest way to open these files to the public is through transfer to The National Archives through the well-established processes.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/19/017
Month Issued	February 2019
Request	<i>Please can you tell me how many of the following the department has bought in each year over the past 5 years, including the total bought so far in 2018/19 –</i> • <i>plastic straws</i> • <i>single use sachets</i> • <i>plastic cutlery and takeaway boxes and plates</i>

	• water bottles • stirrers • plastic cups Please can you also told me the total spent on each item for each year over the past 5 years, and the reason for the purchase if one is given.																																																																					
Response	The Northern Ireland Office only holds records since 2017, the information held is as follows; <table><tr><th rowspan="2">Item</th><th colspan="2">2017</th><th colspan="2">2018</th><th colspan="2">2019</th></tr><tr><th>Purchased</th><th>Cost</th><th>Purchased</th><th>Cost</th><th>Purchased</th><th>Cost</th></tr><tr><td>Plastic Straws</td><td>Nil</td><td>Nil</td><td>Nil</td><td>Nil</td><td>Nil</td><td>Nil</td></tr><tr><td>Single use sachets</td><td>8944</td><td>£396.34</td><td>2744</td><td>£217.89</td><td>Nil</td><td>Nil</td></tr><tr><td>Plastic cutlery</td><td>11000</td><td>£268.16</td><td>18000</td><td>£301.46</td><td>Nil</td><td>Nil</td></tr><tr><td>Takeaway boxes</td><td>4950</td><td>£876.88</td><td>3720</td><td>£683.97</td><td>250</td><td>£34.30</td></tr><tr><td>Plates</td><td>200</td><td>£72.00</td><td>Nil</td><td>Nil</td><td>Nil</td><td>Nil</td></tr><tr><td>Water Bottles</td><td>360</td><td>£138.94</td><td>Nil</td><td>Nil</td><td>Nil</td><td>Nil</td></tr><tr><td>Stirrers</td><td>Nil</td><td>Nil</td><td>Nil</td><td>Nil</td><td>Nil</td><td>Nil</td></tr><tr><td>Plastic Cups</td><td>3000</td><td>£34.20</td><td>2000</td><td>£76.50</td><td>Nil</td><td>Nil</td></tr></table> All items purchased were for business use within the department.	Item	2017		2018		2019		Purchased	Cost	Purchased	Cost	Purchased	Cost	Plastic Straws	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Single use sachets	8944	£396.34	2744	£217.89	Nil	Nil	Plastic cutlery	11000	£268.16	18000	£301.46	Nil	Nil	Takeaway boxes	4950	£876.88	3720	£683.97	250	£34.30	Plates	200	£72.00	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Water Bottles	360	£138.94	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Stirrers	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Plastic Cups	3000	£34.20	2000	£76.50	Nil	Nil
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Request	For your authority's core headquarters department, please state 1) The total amount spent on team building activities, away days and other social actives designed to foster cohesion among staff in each of the following financial years. a) 2016/17 b) 2017/18																																																																					

	2) For each of the above years, please provide a) A list of each team building activity completed by your staff in that year b) The amount spent by your authority on each of these activity in that year c) The number of staff that took part in each activity in that year. d) The accounting line description of the activity. e) A brief description of the activity completed (taken from invoices or other centrally held record, to ensure the request falls within cost. If it is impossible to do this within cost, please disregard this question. <u>Refined Request following refusal of request above [FOI/18/285]</u> Please conduct a free text search of invoices using the search terms 'away day', 'awayday' and 'team building' for the financial years 16/17 and 17/18.
Response	Our invoices are not recorded under the headings you have provided so it is not possible to identify the information you have requested.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/19/019
Month Issued	February 2019
Request	<u>Use of Time & Attendance and Flexible Working Hours ("Flexi-time") software systems by the Civil Service.</u> I would appreciate your cooperation under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, in collating the following information. 1. How many (an approximate number please) of your staff work "Flexi-time" or similar? 2. Do the staff manually record their hours worked OR does the Department use a particular software to manage/record the "Flexi-time"? 3. Who at the Department is responsible for the software(s)? 4. Value of contract (annually)? 5. What is the contract term? 6. When was it signed? 7. What is the notice period? 8. Was it bought through a Procurement framework? 9. Does it interface to other software (e.g.: Payroll/HR, Resource Planning etc.)? 10. Which HR and Payroll software does the Department use?
Response	In answer to question 1, the Northern Ireland Office have a flexi time scheme which staff can work at the discretion of their line manager and this system is operated locally. Data on the numbers working flexi time in this respect is not held.

	In response to questions 2 to 9 inclusive, staff within the NIO record their flexi time manually on an Excel sheet which is held locally and so no software, contract or Procurement framework is required. In response to question 10, the NIO is aligned with the Ministry of Justice, using their shared services, Shared Services Connected Limited, for HR and Payroll purposes. NICS staff on secondment to the NIO separately use HRConnect platforms for HR and Payroll purposes.
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/19/020
Month Issued	February 2019
Request	<i>Can I please make a request under the Freedom of Information Act and I would like to request the following information about the organisation's Local Area Network (LAN) environment.</i> <i>Please can you send me the organisation's Local Area Network (LAN) contract, which may include the following:</i> • <i>Support and Maintenance - e.g. switches, router, software etc</i> • <i>Managed - If this includes services than just LAN.</i> 1. <i>Contract Type: Managed or Maintenance</i> 2. <i>Existing Supplier: Who is the current supplier?</i> 3. <i>Annual Spend for each supplier: What is the annual average spending on the supplier above? If there is more than one supplier please split the annual averages spend for each supplier.</i> 4. <i>Number of Users: Please can you provide me with the number of users this contract covers. Approximate number of users will also be acceptable.</i> 5. <i>Number of Sites: The number of sites, where equipment is supported by each contract.</i> 6. <i>Hardware Brand: What is the hardware brand of the LAN equipment?</i> 7. <i>Contract Description: Please provide me with a brief description of the overall contract.</i> 8. <i>Contract Duration: What is the duration of the contract is and can you please also include any extensions this may include.</i> 9. <i>Contract Expiry Date: When does the contract expire?</i> 10. <i>Contract Review Date: When will the organisation is planning to review the contract?</i> 11. <i>Responsible Officer: Contact details including name, job title, contact number and email address?</i> <i>If the LAN maintenance is included in-house please include the following information:</i>

	1. <i>Hardware Brand: What is the hardware brand of the LAN equipment?</i> 2. <i>Number of Users: Please can you provide me with the number of users this contract covers. Approximate number of users will also be acceptable.</i> 3. <i>Number of Sites: Estimated/Actual number of sites the LAN covers.</i> 4. <i>Responsible Officer: Who within the organisation is responsible for LAN please provide me with contact details including name, job title, contact number and email address?</i> <i>If the contract is managed by a 3rd party e.g. Can you please provide me with</i> 1. <i>Existing Supplier: Who is the current supplier?</i> 2. <i>Number of Users: Please can you provide me with the number of users this contract covers. Approximate number of users will also be acceptable.</i> 3. <i>Number of Sites: Estimated/Actual number of sites the LAN covers.</i> 4. <i>Contract Type: Managed, Maintenance, Installation, Software</i> 5. <i>Hardware Brand: What is the hardware brand of the LAN equipment?</i> 6. <i>Contract Description: Please provide me with a brief description of the overall contract.</i> 7. <i>Contract Duration: What is the duration of the contract is and can you please also include any extensions this may include.</i> 8. <i>Contract Expiry Date: When does the contract expire?</i> 9. <i>Contract Review Date: When will the organisation is planning to review the contract?</i> 10. <i>Responsible Officer: Who within the organisation is responsible for each of these contract(s) please provide me with contact details including name, job title, contact number and email address?</i>
Response	In respect of your questions 1, 2, 6, 8, 9 and 10, The Northern Ireland Office can neither confirm nor deny that it holds the information you requested as the duty in section 1(1)(a) of the FOI Act does not apply, by virtue of both section 24(2) that relates to national security and sections 31(1)(a) and 31(3)(a) that relates to law enforcement and the prevention of crime. However, this should not be taken as conclusive evidence that the information you have requested exists or does not exist. Section 24 is a qualified exemption and so we have considered whether it would be in the public interest for us to confirm or deny whether we hold the information. In this case, we have concluded that the public interest favours neither confirming nor denying whether the requested information is held. Section 31 is a prejudice based exemption and is subject to the public interest test. With regard to your request, we recognise the public interest in knowing whether the government holds particular information. Balanced against this, is the public interest in not releasing information that would aid a criminal intent on launching cyber-attacks on the Department's IT

	systems. In this case we consider that the wider public interest lies in neither confirming nor denying that information, which may have been disclosed in an unauthorised manner, is held. 3. As the supply is part of a wider contract the information requested cannot be detailed out. 4. Approximately 230 5. 2 Sites 7. Fully managed service for IT 11. And 3rd Party request, The Northern Ireland Office received managed ICT services from IT Assist (ITA), which is a service provided by Enterprise Shared Services, a body within the Department of Finance, Northern Ireland. The information requested is, therefore, not held by this Department. This information may be available from the Department of Finance, Northern Ireland who can be contacted at foi@finance-ni.gov.uk. Questions regarding LAN maintenance are not applicable. Regarding questions for the 3rd party information, please see our reply for question 11.
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/19/022
Month Issued	February 2019
Request	<i>Please can you provide details of the following in relation to research and scoping work the NI Office has carried out on the Irish backstop?</i> <i>1. What opinion polling the Northern Ireland Office has carried out to gauge views of Northern Irish citizens on the backstop contained within the withdrawal agreement?</i> <i>2. What research the Northern Ireland office has carried out to seek views of the people of Northern Ireland on the backstop arrangement contained within the withdrawal agreement?</i> <i>3. Which community groups has the Northern Ireland Office spoken with in regards to the backstop arrangement contained within the withdrawal agreement?</i> <i>4. Which other political parties has the Northern Ireland Office spoken with in regards to the backstop arrangement contained within the withdrawal agreement?</i> <i>5. Has the Northern Ireland Office held any conversations with any groups on the pros and cons of the backstop arrangement contained within the withdrawal agreement? If so how many and with who?</i>

Response	Freedom of information law allows us to decline to answer FOI requests when we estimate it would cost us more than £600 (equivalent to 3.5 working days' worth of work, calculated at £25 per hour) to identify, locate, extract and then determine whether we can provide the information that has been asked for in a request (section 12 FOIA). We regret to advise that your request has been declined on these grounds. In order to identify whether the Department holds any records which fall within the scope of the request, officials would be required to locate, analyse and extract a large number of documents and calendar records held by officials across the Department. The cost of doing so would engage the cost limits outlined above. Although we cannot answer your request at the moment, we might be able to answer a further refined request within the cost limit. You may wish to reconsider the scope of your FOI request and submit a revised request, for example by providing a shorter date range, a series of key phrases/terms for us to use in searching our records, or by refining the types of documents or the subjects of the documents you are seeking access to. You can find out more about Section 12 of the FOIA by reading the extract from the Act and some guidance points we consider when applying this exemption, attached at the end of this letter. You can also find more information by reading the full text of the Act, available at Cost limits. <u>ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT SECTION 12(1)</u> We have provided below additional information about Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act. We have included some extracts from the legislation, as well as some of the guidance we use when applying it. We hope you find this information useful. The legislation <u>Section 1: Right of Access to information held by public authorities</u> (1) Any person making a request for information to a public authority is entitled— (a) to be informed in writing by the public authority whether it holds information of the description specified in the request, and (b) if that is the case, to have that information communicated to him. <u>Section 12: Cost of compliance exceeds appropriate limit</u>
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	(1) Section 1(1) does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit. (2) Subsection (1) does not exempt the public authority from its obligation to comply with paragraph (a) of section 1(1) unless the estimated cost of complying with that paragraph alone would exceed the appropriate limit. (3) In subsections (1) and (2) “the appropriate limit” means such amount as may be prescribed, and different amounts may be prescribed in relation to different cases. (4) The Secretary of State may by regulations provide that, in such circumstances as may be prescribed, where two or more requests for information are made to a public authority— a) by one person, or b) by different persons who appear to the public authority to be acting in concert or in pursuance of a campaign, the estimated cost of complying with any of the requests is to be taken to be the estimated total cost of complying with all of them. (5) The Secretary of State may by regulations make provision for the purposes of this section as to the costs to be estimated and as to the manner in which they are to be estimated. Guidance <u>The appropriate limit</u> The 'appropriate limit', for the purposes of section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act has been set at: • £600 for central government and Parliament. • The hourly rate is set at £25 per person per hour. The following activities may be taken into account when public authorities are estimating whether the appropriate limit has been exceeded. • determining whether it holds the information requested • locating the information or documents containing the information • retrieving such information or documents • extracting the information from the document containing it.
FOI Request Reference	FOI/19/023
Month Issued	February 2019
Request	<i>I am writing to you with a request under the Freedom of Information act.</i>

	My request relates to a think-thank, UK 2020. Its website can be found here http://www.uk2020.org.uk/ Under the act, I would like to ask : 1. The number of times UK 2020 or its representatives have sent correspondence to your department's ministers or special advisors; 2. The dates of each piece of correspondence relevant to point 1) above; 3. Copies of any correspondence relevant to point 1) above. Under the act, I would also like to ask : 1. The number of times ministers or special advisers in your department have sent correspondence to UK 2020 or its representatives; 2. The dates of each piece of correspondence relevant to point 1) above; 3. Copies of any correspondence relevant to point 1) above. Please limit your search for relevant material to 1 January 2017 to the present day.
Response	There has been no written correspondence between Ministers from the Northern Ireland Office, or its Special Advisors, and the UK 2020 think-tank.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/19/024
Month Issued	February 2019
Request	Under the freedom of information act, I would like the following regarding workplace use of Slack: • A list of all custom Slack emojis, including the emoji code and source image in the department's Slack workspace. This should be retrievable from the following link in your workspace: https://[workspace name].slack.com/customize/emoji • A list of all channels in the slack workspace • The total number of users in your Slack workspace
Response	In respect of your questions The Northern Ireland Office can confirm the following: - The Northern Ireland Office does not, and has not previously used Slack.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/19/025
Month Issued	February 2019

Request	<i>I am writing to make a request for all the information to which I believe that I am entitled to under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.</i> <i>I wish to enquire about the social media spending which the Department engaged in during the month of December 2018.</i> <i>Specifically I wish to know the amount of money the Department spent on Twitter and Facebook advertisements during this period, what subject these advertisements were in relation to and finally which dates these advertisements appeared.</i>
Response	The Northern Ireland Office did not spend any money on Twitter or Facebook advertisements in December 2018.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/19/026
Month Issued	February 2019
Request	<i>I am writing to make an open government request for all the information to which I am entitled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.</i> <i>I would be grateful if you could supply the following information:</i> <i>1. How many extra full-time equivalent staff have been employed by this department to work on Brexit? Out of that number how many are working on no-deal Brexit?</i> <i>2. How many full-time equivalent staff have been brought in from other government departments/agencies to this department to work on Brexit? Out of that number how many are working on no-deal Brexit?</i> <i>3. How many full-time equivalent staff from your department are working in other areas of government on Brexit?</i>
Response	In response to questions 1 and 2, EU exit affects a number of work areas across the department and will therefore encompass a proportion of workload for many staff, the amount of which will vary over time. The Department has restructured its approach to the way it handles EU exit work, moving from an initial central EU exit co-ordinating team of 7 to the current position where EU exit work is distributed widely across the whole department. Many of the same staff spend a proportion of their time preparing for leaving the EU (a) with and (b) without a deal. Those proportions vary continuously over time. As such it is difficult to quantify the number of staff working on preparing for the UK to leave the EU under any one possible scenario. In response to question 3, there are no members of staff from the Northern Ireland Office who are working in other areas of government on Brexit. The Northern Ireland Office currently employs 164 staff in Belfast and London, including those involved in EU Exit work.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/19/027
Month Issued	February 2019
Request	<i>This is a request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. I would like to request the following information</i> <i>1. Total departmental spending on Brexit (i.e. the UK leaving the EU) in each quarter from July 1 2016-September 30 2016 to October 1 2018-December 31 inclusive.</i> <i>2. A breakdown, per quarter, of how much was spent preparing specifically for:</i> <i>a. the UK leaving the EU with a deal</i> <i>b. the UK leaving the EU without a deal</i> <i>3. How much of the amounts specified in answers 2a and 2b, or if not applicable the amount specified in answer 1, was met through:</i> <i>a. existing departmental spending</i> <i>b. additional funding allocated to the department by the Treasury</i> <i>c. overspending for which funding has yet to be allocated</i>
Response	The law, specifically Section 12(1), allows us to decline to answer FOI requests when we estimate it would cost us more than £600 (equivalent to 3.5 working days' worth of work, calculated at £25 per hour) to identify, locate, extract and then provide the information that has been asked for. We regret to advise that your request has been declined on these grounds. You can find out more about Section 12(1) by reading the extract from the Act and some guidance points we consider when applying this exemption, attached at the end of this letter. You can also find more information by reading the full text of the Act, available at http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/section/12. In order to determine whether the Department holds any records which fall within the scope of the request, officials across the Department would be required to locate, analyse and extract a large number of records. The cost of doing so would engage the cost limits outlined above. Although we cannot answer your request, we might be able to answer a refined request within the cost limit, for example a shorter period of time. However, please note that, as in this instance, a further refined request may still not fall within the FOIA cost limit, or may engage one or more FOIA exemptions.
FOI Request Reference	FOI/19/028
Month Issued	February 2019

Request	<i>I request the following information under the Freedom of Information Act:</i> <i>The amount the Northern Ireland Office has spent on advertising in each of the following national newspapers between 28 January 2017 and 28 January 2018:</i> <i>(a) The Times</i> <i>(b) The Sunday Times</i> <i>(c) The i newspaper</i> <i>(d) The Guardian</i> <i>(e) The Observer</i> <i>(f) The Daily Mirror</i> <i>(g) The Sunday Mirror</i> <i>(h) The Sun</i> <i>(i) The Sun on Sunday</i> <i>(j) The Financial Times</i> <i>(k) The Daily Express</i> <i>(l) The Sunday Express</i> <i>(m) The Daily Mail</i> <i>(n) The Mail on Sunday</i> <i>(o) Metro</i> <i>(p) The Daily Telegraph</i> <i>(q) The Sunday Telegraph</i> <i>(r) Sunday People</i> <i>(s) The Daily Star</i> <i>I would like the information to be provided as an itemised tabled showing the total amount the Northern Ireland Office spent on advertising in each newspaper over the given time frame</i>
Response	The Northern Ireland Office did not spend any money on the above national newspapers between 28 January 2017 and 28 January 2018.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/19/029
Month Issued	February 2019
Request	<i>Could I please request the following IT information for the Northern Ireland Office under the Freedom of Information Act:</i>

	1. Local Area Network a) <i>What Manufacturer is your LAN Network?</i> b) <i>What date does your support contract come up for renewal on the LAN Network?</i> c) <i>What is the current cost of the LAN Network Support?</i> d) <i>Which company is the support contract with?</i> 2. Contacts a) <i>Who is responsible for ICT in the organisation and what are their contact details?</i> b) <i>Who is responsible for ICT Infrastructure in the organisation and what are their contact details?</i> c) <i>Who is responsible for ICT Purchasing in the organisation and what are their contact details?</i> 3. Staff a) <i>How many IT users do you have?</i> b) <i>How many locations/offices do you have?</i>
Response	In respect of Question 1a, c and d the Northern Ireland Office received managed ICT services from IT Assist (ITA), which is a service provided by Enterprise Shared Services, a body within the Department of Finance, Northern Ireland and The Cabinet Office (CO). The information requested is, therefore, not held by this Department. This information may be available from the Department of Finance, Northern Ireland who can be contacted at foi@finance-ni.gov.uk and Cabinet Office at foi-team@cabinetoffice.gov.uk. In respect of question 1b, The Northern Ireland Office can neither confirm nor deny that it holds the information you requested as the duty in section 1(1)(a) of the FOI Act does not apply, by virtue of both section 24(2) that relates to national security and sections 31(1)(a) and 31(3)(a) that relates to law enforcement and the prevention of crime. However, this should not be taken as conclusive evidence that the information you have requested exists or does not exist. Section 24 is a qualified exemption and so we have considered whether it would be in the public interest for us to confirm or deny whether we hold the information. In this case, we have concluded that the public interest favours neither confirming nor denying whether the requested information is held. Section 31 is a prejudice based exemption and is subject to the public interest test. With regard to your request, we recognise the public interest in knowing whether the government holds particular information. Balanced against this, is the public interest in not releasing information that would aid a criminal intent on launching cyber-attacks on the Department's IT

	systems. In this case we consider that the wider public interest lies in neither confirming nor denying that information, which may have been disclosed in an unauthorised manner, is held. For question 2, The person responsible for the organisation, infrastructure and purchasing would be the Head of Estates and Services. As this person is below SCS grade their details should not be disclosed. 3a. Approximately 230 3b. 2 locations
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